



Developments

Economic Development News in Champaign County, Ohio

Spring 2018

Urbana Makes Top 100 Small City List

Urbana is sharing the spotlight with Ohio and the Dayton metro area in *Site Selection Magazine's* recent Governor's Cup rankings of the nation's leading states, cities and smaller communities in economic development.

Ohio ranked second among all states for the sixth straight year for economic development growth – and has placed first or second for more than 10 years.

The Dayton metro area ranked eighth among cities of its size nationally – the 12th consecutive year the region has been in the top 10.

And Urbana is among the nation's top 100 micropolitan cities, with populations between 10,000 and 50,000. Other greater Dayton region towns in the top 100 are Celina, Sidney, Greenville,

Wapakoneta and Wilmington. Bellefontaine, outside the Dayton region, also made the list.

The Ohio Economic Development Association reports, "Where Ohio really outshines the rest of the country is the power and capabilities of our smaller cities. Ohio had more micropolitans in the Top 100 list (16) than any other state. It's the third straight year that Ohio led the list."

Marcia Bailey, director of the Champaign Economic Partnership, said, "Our local economic development success is proof of what partnerships can accomplish. I'm grateful for the excellent working relationships we have developed in Champaign County with businesses, local governments and schools – and the growth mindset they



Ad published in April 23 Urbana Daily Citizen.

bring to the process. We're also grateful for the support of regional partners like the Dayton Development Coalition."



Exterior demolition at Johnson/Q3 site is nearing completion.

Johnson/Q3 Project Progressing

Redevelopment of the former Johnson Manufacturing/Q3 site on Miami and Beech streets in Urbana, is "moving forward quite rapidly now. We're very happy with the progress," says Joe Timm, vice president of True Inspection Services of Urbana, project developer.

The site will be ready for occupancy by spring 2019, he says, adding that TIS is in discussion with parties interested in the property, which is zoned for manufacturing.

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CEP Focuses on 3 Main Goals in 2018

The Champaign Economic Partnership is focusing on three primary goals in 2018 to strengthen the local economy:

- Continued workforce development to meet local employers' needs
- Expand infrastructure for new housing for the growing workforce and to attract people to move to Champaign County
- Recruit new private partners to the Champaign Economic Partnership to help fund and drive economic development initiatives

CEP board member Jill O'Neal, who served on a task force to develop the goals, said that the CEP will continue partnerships developed with business and educators to prepare students for the workforce.



Jill O'Neal

O'Neal, who is human resources manager of WEIDMANN Electrical Technology of Urbana, said that the CEP has formed

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These Graham High School students are enrolled in Ohio Hi-Point's Aviation program.

Hi-Point Ready County Students to Enter Workforce, Careers

To help prepare students for the workforce, Ohio Hi-Point Career Center has 12 satellite career programs – and one pilot program – in Champaign County schools.

The Fall 2017 edition of *CEP Developments* reported on Zack Zizzo, a 2017 graduate of Hi-Point's advanced manufacturing program at Triad. He now works as a paid intern at ORBIS Corporation in Urbana, which is assisting him with tuition to complete the two-year mechanical engineering technology program at Clark State Community College.

Now more than 600 students are enrolled in Hi-Point satellite programs at local schools. More than 100 of them are graduating this spring. The programs include advanced manufacturing at Triad, information technology at Mechanicsburg and Graham high schools, business at Graham, supply chain management at Triad, agriculture at Graham and Triad, biomedical sciences at Graham, aviation technologies at Graham/Grimes Field, a pilot program in teaching professions at Graham, and Career Connections classes at Graham, Mechanicsburg and Urbana.

Study Finds Need for Local Hotel

A feasibility study arranged by the CEP and conducted by third-party consultant Core Distinction Group of Wisconsin determined sufficient demand to support a new hotel in Urbana with 70 to 80 guest rooms and meeting space.

Since the release of the report, BriMark Builders, LLC, which constructs Cobblestone hotels, has held two informational meetings in Urbana – with a third to be scheduled in May – to generate and gauge interest in building a hotel in the city.

The feasibility study reviewed current lodging options in the region, analyzed economic indicators and growth potential and included interviews of representatives of overnight-stay generators such as tourist attractions and events, Urbana University, manufacturers, Mercy Health – Urbana Hospital and other businesses.

For more information, call the CEP at 937-653-7200.

New Comprehensive Plan to Guide Future Development

Work is underway to create a new comprehensive plan to guide future economic and community development in Champaign County.

The Logan-Union-Champaign Planning Commission (LUC) is developing the plan on behalf of Champaign County commissioners, with the guidance of a steering committee of Champaign County leaders. CEP Director Marcia Bailey serves on the committee with representatives of county, city, village and township government, business, public safety, agriculture, health and safety, utilities and recreation.

The county's comprehensive plan was last updated in 2004. The process for the new plan begins with a review of current conditions, trends, data and studies, along with a public online survey on community needs.

The plan will include sections on land use, housing, utilities, transportation, natural resources, conservation and agricultural land preservation, an airport overlay district, economic conditions, flood zone protection, community facilities, a comprehensive land-use plan and unified zoning text and color code for use throughout the county.

The draft of the plan will be presented at a public open house, and local officials will be provided a comment period before the plan is formally adopted. Plan completion is expected in December 2018.

JOBS Team Ready to Help

To help businesses succeed and grow in Champaign County, the Champaign Economic Partnership has created the JOBS (Jobs, Opportunities, Buildings and Space) Team.

The JOBS Team will visit local businesses to learn what they need to help maintain or expand operations in the county. For instance, additional staff, workforce training, land or financing for expansion, zoning and infrastructure improvements.

"We want to make sure our businesses are being taken care of and have what they need to succeed," CEP Director Marcia Bailey said. "That's because when our businesses succeed, our community succeeds, with more jobs and a stronger economy and quality of life."

Joining Bailey on the core JOBS Team are Susan Bailey-Evans of Champaign County Department of Job and Family Services; Ohio Hi-Point Superintendent Rick Smith; County Commissioner Steve Hess; City of Urbana Director of Administration Kerry Brugger; Christopher Washington, Executive Vice President and Provost of Urbana University; and Toni Overholser of Clark State Community College.

Others could be asked to join a business visit, depending on the business's location or special needs. For instance, a township trustee, village mayor or administrator, or a representative of the Dayton Development Coalition, Bailey said.

For more information about the JOBS Team or to arrange a visit to your business, call the CEP at 937-653-7200.



CEP, Chamber Sponsor Legislative Breakfast

U.S. Rep. Jim Jordan updated 40 guests on issues before Congress at the Champaign County Legislative Breakfast in January at the Madison-Champaign Educational Service Center. State and local government leaders also provided updates. The Champaign Economic Partnership and the Champaign County Chamber of Commerce were co-sponsors.

CEP Agent for Mechanicsburg Property

Mechanicsburg Village Council has approved a resolution authorizing the CEP to act as the village's agent in transfer of abandoned downtown property owned by the village, at 2-4 N. Main St., for development by a new owner.

In 2017, Mechanicsburg designated the CEP to serve as the village's economic development agency.

Two parties have expressed interest in the property. The property is zoned for business with residential (for renovation or redevelopment).

More Businesses Flying the 'Open' Flag

The CEP recently presented Open flags to these Champaign County businesses. Join us in thanking them for making our county a better place to live.



McNeely's Auto Repair, 331 N. Main St., Urbana.



The Hive Market & Deli, 22 S. Main St., Mechanicsburg.



Wildman's Sewing & Bridal, 200 Scioto St., Urbana.



PB & J on Main Vintage and Collectibles, 122 S. Main St., Urbana.

Partnerships Key to Senior Apartments

The CEP, Urbana City Schools, the City of Urbana and a property developer have been working together to pave the way for a plan to redevelop Urbana North and South elementary schools and the Douglas Inn in downtown Urbana into 51 affordable senior citizen apartments.

The project depends upon the developer, Flaherty & Collins Properties of Indianapolis, obtaining funding. Flaherty & Collins will learn in May whether its application to the Ohio Housing Finance Authority for historic tax credits is approved. If the application is not accepted, Flaherty & Collins plans to reapply in 2019.

To allow the project to progress once funding is available:

- **Urbana City Council** unanimously passed a resolution supporting the development plan
- **The Urbana school board** passed a resolution approving the sale of North and South elementary schools to the city for \$1 per building, as the schools are being replaced by Urbana City Schools' new K-8 building, set to open next fall on U.S. 68, south of the city.
- **The CEP board** approved a resolution for the CEP, as Champaign County's Community Improvement Corporation, to act as agent for the properties and negotiate the sale with Flaherty & Collins

The school board set a purchase price of \$354,000 for both buildings, to which Flaherty & Collins has agreed. The check will go to the city, and the city and CEP will deduct costs they incur in the transaction. In addition, the CEP will receive a 3 percent fee as agent. The school district will receive the balance of the sale proceeds.

"This project proves the benefits of the collaborative spirit we have in our community," CEP Director Marcia Bailey said. "Economic growth and community development depend on private and public sectors working together, and we are fortunate to have that in Champaign County."



Artist's depiction of renovated Johnson Manufacturing building on Miami Street in Urbana.

Progress in Q3 Redevelopment

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Soil remediation at the rear of the property's west side is nearly complete. And Urbana Director of Administration Kerry Brugger said that the city has contracted a certified professional to monitor the cleanup and manage all documentation to be submitted to the Ohio EPA.

Asbestos abatement also is nearly complete, and exterior building demolition will be finished by late April, Matt Christison, president of 3C Contracting, Inc. of Urbana, reports.

That will clear the way to restore and renovate the front section of the Johnson Manufacturing Company building that faces Miami Street (illustration above). This part of the project will start with interior demolition. Renovations are expected to begin this fall once design work by an architect is complete.

CEP Presents 2018 Goals

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the JOBS team (see Page 2) to routinely visit businesses to learn what they need to maintain or expand operations here. The CEP also continually monitors local workforce needs through the Champaign County Business Advisory Council and the Champaign County Manufacturers Council.

In addition, O'Neal said, the CEP has formed a committee to market Champaign County as a good place to live, work and do business.

Housing is an issue, O'Neal said, because "it's been nearly 20 years since there has been new housing development. With the increase in jobs available in Champaign County, we see a gap in job seekers being able to find local housing."

The new Champaign County comprehensive plan now under development (see Page 2) will examine growth opportunities for housing throughout the county.

The CEP operates with support of public and private partners, and in 2018 will seek support of additional private partnership investors to help support the CEP's economic development, job creation/retention and marketing activities.

3 New Partners Support CEP

Three more businesses have joined the Champaign Economic Partnership (CEP) as Partnership Investors, supporting the CEP's mission to advance economic growth and job creation in Champaign County.

They are Urbana University, which has joined at the Champion Benefactor level; Clark State Community College, at the Advocate level; and Peoples Savings Bank, at the Support level.



They join eight other CEP Partnership Investors: Pioneer Electric Cooperative, DP&L, KTH Parts Industries, Inc. and FASTLANE, which are Champion Benefactors; Memorial Health, Patron level; and Security National Bank, WEIDMANN Electrical Technology and Mercy Health, Advocate level.

Business Tax Incentives Reap Development and New Jobs

Two economic development programs provided under Ohio law – the Enterprise Zone (EZ) and Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) – allow local governments to grant businesses temporary property tax exemptions for investments in facility improvements and new construction and creating and retaining jobs.

In March, the Champaign County Tax Incentive Review Council (TIRC) voted to continue tax incentive agreements for four businesses – American Pan Company, Ultra-met Company, White's Service Center and KTH Parts Industries – which are following through on commitments to expand and create and retain jobs.

Combined, they have invested more than \$10 million in facility improvements and expansions, created 87 new jobs (compared to a proposed increase of 56 jobs) and retained 1,000 jobs.

In addition, TIRC approved expiration of two tax abatement agreements, for KTH Parts Industries and a 10-unit T-hangar at Grimes Field, which achieved their goals of \$30 million in property investment and 94 retained jobs.

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